

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, re-examination and reconsideration of the subject matter identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.112, and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

Claims 17, 27, 35, 37 and 38 have been amended in response to issues raised in the Office Action. Claims 23 and 24 have been amended for purpose of clarification. Claims 17-30 and 33-38 remain pending in this application.

Claims 17-30 and 33-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth in paragraph (2) of the Office Action. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are requested in view of the above amendments and for at least the reasons which follow.

Applicants disagree with the statement in the Office Action that the subject matter of claims 37 and 38 no longer pertains to claims 17 and 35. Claims 37 and 38 are directed to embodiments in the independent claims where a substituted 5-membered nitrogenous heterocycle is used as a blocking agent. Claims 17 and 35 only exclude 1,2,4-triazole/methyl ethyl ketoxime combinations.

The second objection in the Office Action relates to claim 27. Since claim 27 depends upon claim 17, the provisos in claim 17 also apply to claim 27. Those of ordinary skill would understand that in the triazole/methyl ethyl ketoxime pair in claim 27, only 1,2,4-triazole is excluded. For clarification purposes only, claim 27 has been amended to specify what was previously implied.

In response to the third objection in the Office Action, claims 17 and 35 have been amended to place the provisos at the end of the claims.

With respect to the fourth and fifth objections to claim 17, Applicants disagree with the Examiner's position for reasons fully set forth in the last response. Those of ordinary skill in this art, having knowledge of the prior art and having read the present specification, would have no trouble in understanding and appreciating the scope of the claims.

However, in an effort to expedite prosecution, claim 17 has been amended to remove the phrase "that is, the lowest temperature" and to specify that the overall release temperature "is equal to or close to that of the group which is released first." Those of ordinary skill would readily be able to determine the overall release temperature by reference to the present specification.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the §112, second paragraph, rejection of claims 17-30 and 33-38 should be withdrawn and this application passed to issue. Such action is earnestly requested.

Claims 37 and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for the reason given in paragraph (3) of the Office Action. Reconsideration of this rejection is requested in view of the following.

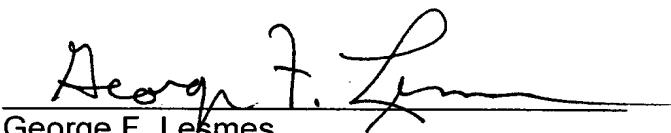
Support for the subject matter of these claims as amended, may be found in the specification on page 11, lines 5-17. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (703) 838-6683.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

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By: 
George F. Lesmes
Registration No. 19,995

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620